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Chair

Mr. Tom Lukiwski

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● (1100)

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)): Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the committee meeting.

In today's meeting, we're resuming the study of the estimates process. In the first hour, we'll have the departmental results framework.

We have, from the Treasury Board, Mr. Brian Pagan.

Welcome again.

We also have Mr. Derek Armstrong, who is the Executive Director, Results Division.

Mr. Pagan, do you have any opening remarks?

Mr. Brian Pagan (Assistant Secretary, Expenditure Management Sector, Treasury Board Secretariat): I do, Madam Chair. In fact, I've got a very brief presentation that I'll project here. There are eight slides that will basically provide an overview and a foundational understanding of the policy on results in the department of results frameworks. We'll take questions on that and then turn to a demo on InfoBase.

I'm also joined at the table by my colleagues from expenditure management sector, Chantal Clow and Andrew Gibson. They'll be aiding in the presentation today.

If I may, in the presentation in front of you, slide 2 simply provides some context in terms of the government's results agenda. There are really three pieces that serve as important background here. First is changes at the cabinet level, the creation by the Prime Minister of a new cabinet committee, known as the agenda, results, and communications committee. This brings a focus to results discussions that is a key part of the results agenda going forward.

Second, we have some machinery changes. In late 2015 or early 2016, thePrime Minister announced the creation of a new central unit in the Privy Council Office, known as the results and delivery unit, to provide central oversight of the results agenda and to support his cabinet committee.

Third, we have a new Treasury Board policy that came into effect on July 1, 2016. The policy on results provides a framework for a whole-of-government view of reporting and results, including articulating core responsibilities and key results expectations, identifying a program inventory that departments report on in part III of the estimates, and then making adjustments to ongoing performance measurement and evaluation of programs.

[*Translation*]

So that is a brief overview of what is behind our new policy. I will now highlight the key elements.

[*English*]

Slide 3 presents in visual form the key elements of the policy. A starting point is the articulation by departments of what we call departmental results frameworks. These are developed by departments, and they are presented by ministers to ministers. The responsible minister will come to the Treasury Board table identifying his or her departmental results framework, which includes the core responsibilities of the department, the key results that they expect to achieve in support of those core responsibilities, and then an explanation of the performance indicators that departments will assess throughout the year to determine whether they're on track.

The program inventories are the mass of programs within a department that support the core responsibilities. This can be anything from, using CRA as an example, a program aimed at audit of large tax filers. In our case, at the Treasury Board Secretariat, we have a program related to our responsibilities as the employer, so there's a program related to collective bargaining.

The performance information profiles are the information holdings of the department. The key metrics of the program in terms of the budget are the number of FTEs—again, some very important performance information—and then plans in terms of how performance will be assessed over the year.

Finally, a key part of the policy was a renewed focus on evaluation. Prior to 2016, there was a requirement for all government departments to evaluate all programming on a five-year basis, so big or small, all programs had to be evaluated on a five-year basis. We found this, in consultation with both departments and our colleagues in other central agencies, to be out of sync with the real needs of both departments and central agencies.

● (1105)

As an example, in a world in which it was mandatory to evaluate a program, the cycle would unfold and we would be in the fifth year, and so a department would have to evaluate program x or y. In some cases it could be a long-standing program that had been evaluated several times in the past, that was of relatively low dollar value, with no changes foreseen. A mandatory evaluation of that program might have displaced something that might have been more critical for the department or the government in terms of future decision points—whether a program was sunsetting, whether it was being considered for significant adjustments as a result of requirements from stakeholders or of discussions with provinces, etc.

The renewed policy and evaluation introduces more flexibility to departments to adopt a risk approach and a needs-based approach to evaluation so that they can have pertinent information at the time of decisions rather than at a set time mandated by a mandatory requirement.

Slide 4 explains a couple of key pillars of this policy, with particular emphasis on governance structures and people. Key in our formulation of the governance of the policy was the designation of certain officials within departments for responsibility in the creation of new monitoring and decision-making bodies in departments.

[*Translation*]

For example, there is the centralized performance measurement and evaluation committee. It's a new committee.

[*English*]

It didn't exist before the policy. It's led by a deputy minister or associate and has the responsibility to monitor the performance and evaluation work of the department and make sure that such information is considered as part of the ongoing management and resource allocation decisions of the department.

The policy also designated within each department a lead for performance measurement and evaluation. In some cases, departments have chosen to make those positions one and the same; in others, they have a separate evaluation function and a separate head of performance measurement.

The policy also made clear that it's not the head of performance measurement or some other official in the department who is responsible for a specific program. It is the functional lead of that program who is responsible for performance measurement and achieving the objectives.

As a final point to note on governance, Treasury Board approves programs through Treasury Board submissions. In the past they have contained bits and pieces of results information that justify the program expenditure and set out what the organization is trying to do. As a result of the policy, we made this a very clear requirement moving forward. There is a results annex in each and every Treasury Board submission that clearly lays out objectives over the short, medium, and long term, with measures of success in the indicators, and the deputy head of the organization signs off on that results annex.

Turning to slide 5, here are some advantages of this new approach. It's a more systematic way of presenting information and of more explicitly tying resource allocation to the results that departments are trying to achieve.

Slide 6 presents this in visual form. You have your core responsibility, your results expectations and indicators, and then the program underneath.

● (1110)

Slide 7 is a visual representation of a very real example of this. This is for the Canada Revenue Agency, which has identified core responsibilities related to tax, benefits, and its ombudsman role. That layer across the top is your core responsibilities, then underneath, you have your results and expectations, and then the performance indicators.

[*Translation*]

Madam Chair, that was a brief overview of our policy.

After your questions, we will turn things over to Andrew Gibson, who will demonstrate the Government of Canada's InfoBase system, or GC InfoBase.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): The second half of this presentation will be on InfoBase, so we will go with the first round of questions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Drouin, you have seven minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Thanks to the witnesses for being here today.

I want to start by trying to understand the point of all this, so that my constituents can understand why we go through this exercise and why the departments go through this exercise. As parliamentarians, why do we need better information to understand that?

Could you explain to us the previous policy on departmental plans and results? I'm assuming you were about to explain the advantages, but we ran out of time. Perhaps you could also explain the differences.

Mr. Brian Pagan: The Government of Canada has been involved in performance budgeting or results-based management, in some form or another, since the 1970s. This focus on results and performance measurement is something that seized governments across the western world in the seventies to take what, some would say, is a more business-like approach or prescribed approach to understanding value for money and what we were aspiring to achieve through resource allocation.

The policy that existed prior to the policy on results was known as the management, resources, and results structure and that dates from 2005, I believe. That policy replaced a previous iteration known as the planning, reporting, and accountability structure. In each case, adjustments or refinements to the policies have been based on inputs and feedback from stakeholders, like the Office of the Auditor General, the PBO, and other departments. We look comparatively at what's happening in other jurisdictions. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development shares lessons on performance budgeting and results-based management.

In 2016, the refinement of the policy took inputs and feedback from those stakeholders that I mentioned and reflected the priorities of the new government, where there is a mandate to adopt evidence-based decision-making and, specifically through the mandate of the President of the Treasury Board, to improve reporting to Parliament. The policy was very much designed with those two mandates in mind to develop clearer evidence and clearer linkages between resource allocation decisions and the results that we're trying to achieve, and to improve reporting. The improved reporting has taken two forms: adjustments to part III of the estimates to make them better organized and more streamlined and, as we'll see in the second half, making all of this information more readily accessible through online tools, such as TBS InfoBase.

Mr. Francis Drouin: You've mentioned that reporting was, I assume, the goal of the DRPs at the time to allow parliamentarians to have better information and accountability. I'm reading here that one of the advantages is that information is used by departments to make decisions. Are we now seeing real-time information that departments can use to move forward, if they're not meeting objective A, B, or C, and that this information is useful to them as well?

● (1115)

Mr. Brian Pagan: That's right. That takes two forms. Departments are being quite explicit now in their Treasury Board submissions with the results that they hope to achieve from the resource allocation decision. We have also created these performance measurement and evaluation committees with departments. Within a department, that body will look at all of the programs in the department and the specific results desired for each program and they will provide a forum for ongoing monitoring throughout the year, so that departmental management has an eye on their progress, with respect to performance measurement in the department. They can direct the evaluation process, so that they're getting additional information as well. They can then take that information and make sure that it is considered as part of their ongoing program adjustments throughout the year and their future resource allocation decisions.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Something wasn't clear to me. You mentioned that the people doing the evaluation would not be the people involved in certain projects aimed at attaining those objectives. Is that correct?

Mr. Brian Pagan: That's correct. By design, the evaluation function is at a distance from the actual program management. It provides a more objective lens. The policy does make clear that it's not the evaluator or the head of performance measurement who is responsible for achieving program objectives; it is a senior official responsible for that program. Every program has been identified by the department in its program inventory profiles, and when you identify a program, you identify the functional lead for that program. If you have a fisheries program, the director general responsible for that particular fisheries program will be responsible and accountable for the results.

Mr. Francis Drouin: But the person doing the evaluation still reports to the same deputy head as the person leading the project?

Mr. Brian Pagan: That's right.

Mr. Francis Drouin: What would you tell Canadians who might say you're still reporting to the same deputy head, so we may not have confidence because it truly is not a third party. What other mechanism exists in government to ensure there is that third party verification, whether or not the objectives were reached?

Mr. Brian Pagan: That's a very appropriate question.

There are a number of mechanisms. First of all, the evaluation function resident in a department can and often does avail itself of third party expertise, so they will arrange for professional services to help with evaluations. There are also arm's-length organizations, such as the Office of the Auditor General, that provide completely independent views on value for money and the functioning of programs.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Great, thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): We'll move to Mr. McCauley for seven minutes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Good morning. We've run into some issues with the departments when we asked them about what their allotments were for—to explain them, describe them, give us backup on what their planned results are—and we don't get an answer, and they don't show up in the departmental plans.

If the funding has been requested by the departments, why isn't there an explanation of what the program is meant for, and why aren't the planned results shown in the DPs, the departmental plans?

Mr. Brian Pagan: I'm not sure I caught all the question. You mentioned something about allotments?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I meant the vote 40 items. Why are they not showing up in the departmental plans? What backup are they using to request this money? We've asked several departments, and one of the departments got back to us and said, we should ask Treasury Board; they were told to put it in for their own department. They couldn't even describe their own department's money. Public service, procurement, they shrugged about what the money was for.

Mr. Brian Pagan: That may be a two-part question.

When programs have been presented and approved by Treasury Board, those programs are presented in departmental plans in the tabled version. In the very near future, we intend to supplement the information in the tabled document with some additional—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That was my next question. When will we see that? This government is asking us to pre-approve $7.4 billion, but when we've asked the department, the departments haven't got—and I'm going to be blunt—a bloody clue in the world what that money is for.

Mr. Brian Pagan: Just to be clear, Mr. McCauley, what we'll present online is additional detail for information that's—

● (1120)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: You can't say "additional detail". There's no detail with respect to what's in the vote 40. We asked about the $300 million in procurement—

Mr. Brian Pagan: I'm not talking about vote 40 yet. I'm talking about the items in the departmental plan. We'll be doing—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm asking when will we see a backup and explanation for the money in vote 40.

Mr. Brian Pagan: I'm describing what's in the departmental plans and the additional detail that will be available in InfoBase. That's occurring in the very near future. We're just doing a Q and A on information to be able to post it.

We've had this discussion previously. Most of the items in vote 40, as you know, have not yet been presented and approved by Treasury Board. We are now meeting regularly and we're seeing items and they will be posted on a monthly basis on both the online site that already exists—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Are the allocations on the Treasury Board site?

Mr. Brian Pagan: Yes, and there will be additional information in InfoBase. Andrew is going to demonstrate our budget tracker for you when we get to that session.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: When will see a breakdown of the money broken out as it is or should be in departmental plans? If we look at what has been posted so far in the allocations from Treasury Board, it has:

> Securing Market Access for Canada's Agriculture and Agri-Food Products.
>
> This funding will support the agricultural and agri-food sector in maintaining and opening new international markets and to address capacity gaps in the Canadian Food Inspection Agency as a result of previously negotiated trade agreements.

It doesn't say what that money's going to be used for, whether it's staffing or trips, etc. When will we actually see a proper breakdown?

Again, it gets back to the government asking us to pre-approve $7.5 billion without the departments being able to defend what that money is for. We've had them before us. One of the departments says, we don't know what the back part of the breakdown is; we were just told by Treasury Board to put it in.

We can't even request the information from the departments, because they don't even know what's in the money that they're asking us to pre-approve. You said we're going to get more breakdown on the monthly updates. But we have the one from the allocation for Treasury Board and there's no added information.

Mr. Brian Pagan: Respectfully, Mr. McCauley, we're mixing up apples and oranges here. Vote 40 exists to be able to enhance transparency for Parliament so that Parliament understands how they are voting on main estimates that will be reconciled to the budget. It is intended to provide that alignment and transparency in terms of the appropriations anticipated for the year.

In terms of the program approvals, as you know, a number of items are working their way through the approval process now, and when those projects are approved they will be listed or added to the website, which already includes the information on sunsetting programs that have been approved.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: For these items that were updated April 12, have they gone through the TBS process?

Mr. Brian Pagan: Sorry, which table are you referring to?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: This one, "Allocations from Treasury Board Central Votes". They've gone through the process?

Mr. Brian Pagan: Yes, they have.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: So they've gone through the process, they've been approved by Treasury Board, but we still don't even have the data of what that money's going to be used for. We don't have a breakdown. That's what I'm asking. The government's asked for pre-approval of $7.5 billion without the departments even apparently knowing what the money is for. Why don't we actually see—

Mr. Brian Pagan: On anything that's been approved by Treasury Board, the department or myself can provide information on the votes involved. There would information about FTEs. In fact, I believe there was a question either from this committee or a question in the House that sought information by vote and FTEs, and that has been provided through our parliamentary affairs office.

That is the case with everything else in vote 40. As it's approved, we will be able to list information in terms of where that allocation fits in terms of the departmental program inventory and the votes and personnel information related to that program.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'll be blunt. It seems rather lacking, the information. You've approved it, it's gone through the Treasury Board submission. You may want to have a look. I think it's very lacking and certainly doesn't provide transparency on how the pre-approved money is being spent.

You've commented in your handout, under "Advantages" on page 5, "information is used to report to Parliamentarians (DPs)", departmental plans, but we have $7.5 billion, which, when you back out, say, transfers for infrastructure, it's almost 10% of the entire spending. It doesn't actually show up in the departmental plans. It says, "The robustness, reliability and usefulness of this information is being tested..."and "As departments identify their plans (DPs)." Then it says "At this point, we know..." and "Overall cost of a program linked to an organization's Core Responsibilities."

Again, all this money is not in the department plans. We see no results expected for the $7.5 billion. It goes counter to what you've actually presented to us about openness, information being used to report to parliamentarians the departmental plans. The money's not in the departmental plans.

● (1125)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you, Mr. McCauley.

We'll now go to Mr. Blaikie for seven minutes.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): I was just wondering if you could tell the committee how many of the vote 40 items have been to Treasury Board and been approved since the tabling of the main estimates?

Mr. Brian Pagan: I don't have the table in front of me that Mr. McCauley's referring to, but from memory, it was approximately 33 at the time of tabling main estimates. And since then, as the president mentioned at our last appearance, there were two two-week breaks between the tabling of the budget and the tabling of the main estimates, so that obviously interrupted Treasury Board business. Since Treasury Board has returned on the week of April 16, there have been several meetings and many budget items presented and approved. I don't have the actual numbers. Those will be listed, as per our commitment, on a monthly basis, and the first listing or the first update, I understand, is for the first week of June, June 3 or 4. We'll see an update to the listing at that point.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Okay, so you don't have any idea how many have actually gone through Treasury Board?

Mr. Brian Pagan: I can tell you that there's been a good number, but I don't have a specific number.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Would it be possible to provide that number to the committee earlier in the process?

Mr. Brian Pagan: There are some matters of confidence in terms of Treasury Board business, and I'll confer with the president's office. There is a commitment to update this list monthly, and that list will be updated in the first week of June. Beyond that....

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I just think for us because we're under time constraints in terms of our study, and in fact, we have less time to study the estimates than we once did, about six weeks less, and we're being asked to approve over $7 billion worth of funding. It would be nice to have that information earlier. Not only would it be nice, but I think it would be appropriate for parliamentarians to have that information earlier to get a sense of the promise that was made by the President of the Treasury Board that these items would be approved in short order and that Parliament would be informed of that progress.

While I appreciate that the government wants to report to the public and that they have a specific period in which they're going to do that, I don't think there's anything inappropriate about helping parliamentarians make a better informed decision on the timeline. We're being asked to make that decision.

There is some question, under the new framework, about less reporting at the subprogram and the sub-subprogram level. I just wanted to be clear, though, in terms of wording for appropriation bills. When we talk about new programs, I'm just looking for where new programs are defined, or what it takes to establish a new program. I know the language in the appropriation bill is about new grants. I'm just wondering if establishing a new grant is effectively establishing a new program, and vice versa, or if there's a distinction between new grants and new programs.

Mr. Brian Pagan: There's a very important distinction here. Every grant must be listed and approved through the estimates process, and in many cases those grants are part of larger programs, but in other cases, they are a stand-alone program. We do make a distinction between a program and a grant. All grants have to be listed and approved. Programs can be an amalgam of all kinds of activity, which includes counter service, grants to third party organizations, and studies with stakeholders and partners.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: How does a parliamentarian typically come to know when a new grant is establishing a new program?

Mr. Brian Pagan: In the main estimates, we will break out the core responsibilities, the results expectations for the department. The programs are actually approved by the executive. They are not approved by Parliament. And if I may, this opens up a theme that both you and Mr. McCauley have raised, which is the programs related to budget 2018. Respectfully, Parliament does not approve programs. The executive organizes the work of departments into programs, and they present that for information.

● (1130)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Now that's only true if a new program doesn't require a new statutory authority. If a new program required a new statutory authority, then it.... So, in fact, programs are approved by Parliament because you need statutory authority from Parliament in order to proceed with a program.

Mr. Brian Pagan: There are some programs—

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Within the existing statutory authorities, programs are decided by the executive. But. ultimately, they have approval by Parliament through statute.

Mr. Brian Pagan: Every department will have enabling legislation, and that enabling legislation has been approved by Parliament.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: And it is sometimes the case that new programs require new kinds of statutory authority.

Mr. Brian Pagan: Where there are separate statutory authorities required, there would be enabling legislation for that purpose, but in the voted expenditures that we're presenting in budget 2018, the $7.04 billion, there are no new programs created through that funding that have not previously been approved by Treasury Board.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: How are we supposed to evaluate that claim as parliamentarians because for the lion's share of items in vote 40, they don't appear in the departmental plan? There's not actually any real information about those grants or potential programs in the estimates. I can take your word for it, but if I'm interested in doing my due diligence and performing my oversight role on government, then how do I do that? If I want to look for just about any item in that vote 40 column, if there's no information about what the program envisions.... I can get a glimpse of some of that if I look at the budget document, but the budget document isn't part of the estimates, so it's not part of the set of documents. The estimates are meant to provide parliamentarians with the information they need in order to approve funding, and to know whether that's appropriate or not. If that information is in the budget document, and incidentally, it's still not even really in the budget document because the budget document is vague, that's fine. It's not the job of the budget document to provide detailed information to provide authority. We're in an awkward position where that's actually the document we're being referred to. If you look at the estimates, you'll see that none of that information is there.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you, Mr. Blaikie.

If Ms. Mendès wants you to, you can answer both questions at that time.

Madam Mendès, you have seven minutes.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Thank you all for being here.

Yes, I would like you to answer that because I do think it's an important question. It's important that we clarify this, hopefully once and for all. We keep getting these questions about what vote 40 really means, and about how we as parliamentarians can have oversight over those expenditures.

Mr. Pagan.

Mr. Brian Pagan: Thank you, Madam Mendès.

Mr. McCauley and Mr. Blaikie, there's been much discussion and no shortage of confusion over the government's efforts to align the estimates with the budget and over the use of TB vote 40, the budget implementation vote, to help achieve that.

I do take the point that the items in budget 2018 and represented in TB vote 40, the budget implementation act, are not included in departmental plans. That's a truism.

In the same vein, in years past where we've had the main estimates, then the budget, and then a series of supplementary estimates (A), (B), and (C), Parliament has voted in supplementary estimates (A), (B), and (C) for new spending and, in some cases, new programs that were not foreseen in the main estimates and were not part of the departmental plan that was tabled by the department on or before March 31.

If the question is "how do we know what we're voting on because it's not in the departmental plan?", I would simple point out that this has always been a weakness of our system. It's a weakness that—

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: [*Inaudible—Editor*] and the voting sucks.

Mr. Brian Pagan: —we're trying to address.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Mr. Blaikie, it's not your turn.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: I was quiet while you were asking your questions. I would really appreciate the same favour.

Mr. Brian Pagan: On March 31, 2016, we received royal assent for supplementary estimates C. That was the last day of the fiscal year. Royal assent came at 6:30 p.m. Parliament exercised its responsibility by calling officials to explain what was in supplementary estimates C. Very few of those items would have been in departmental plans because they were coming from the budget tabled the preceding February. Parliament gave its approval. Departments had, effectively, no time to spend the money because the day was over. The year was over.

That speaks to this challenge that we have where departments have to manage programs, deliver services, and achieve results. Parliament needs a mechanism to be able to ensure that there is oversight and transparency so that they understand what's going on. The government is obligated to provide real and meaningful information so that we can present this information.

The results policy seeks to look at some of these tensions by better sequencing the process. The president's reform agenda in the results policy is part of that. Now you can effectively ensure oversight of the main estimates because you know the departments are going to spend $7 billion as set out in the budget.

In many cases, those plans have not yet been approved, so they may not be in a position to tell you how much is in vote 1 and how much is in vote 5. But in many other cases, they have a very clear idea of the type of work that they're going to do.

With regard to Fisheries and Oceans, there's $150 million in the budget for small craft harbours. The department, if asked, I'm sure would be in a position to identify some of the locales in which it is looking to make investments to improve small craft harbours. That information was provided to us—

● (1135)

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: I understand what you're trying to say. I hope that they got their answers because you were very clear.

However, I do have a question that I'd like to ask before I finish my time. It has to do with something that the Auditor General has repeatedly come up with in the past year or so when he comes out with his reports: how our programs and our measures, as government, impact citizens. When we do the evaluations of performance and so on in departments, we often look much more at processes than necessarily the outcomes that they bring to Canadians.

Would you have a comment on that or a way to address that issue? You told us about the whole new evaluation measures that you're putting forth. How would we address this issue? How are we going to measure outcomes for Canadians?

Mr. Brian Pagan: The Auditor General is not alone in identifying some criticisms of past efforts to improve performance measurements and the delivery of programs. There have been a number of stakeholders, including some academics—and I'm thinking of Donald Savoie in New Brunswick—who have been very critical of feeding the beast: doing things, generating reports for the sake of generating reports, conducting an evaluation for the sake of conducting an evaluation.

That is part of the discourse that we considered when we reset our policy with the new policy on results in July 2016. We've tried to make this simpler and more intuitive so the core responsibilities... using CRA as an example, it's tax, it's benefits administration, it's their ombudsman role. That's what they do. Then underneath that they've got some clear results expectations, and some of them are quite specific in terms of service standards, etc.

That, for us, is the objective: to make the results clear, understandable, and something that can be objectively measured—wait times, turnaround times to issue permits and licences, tax returns, and this sort of thing. There are some transactional areas that lend themselves very well to that sort of results approach. There are others that are a work in process, and we need to account for that.

Clearly what's motivating us here is to be more specific about why a department exists, what it's trying to achieve, and how it's going to measure success.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Now we go to the five-minute round.

Mr. Kelly, you have five minutes.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): How are these items in vote 40 going to be reported in the public accounts, through their respective department's or through Treasury Board's?

● (1140)

Mr. Brian Pagan: Upon approval from Treasury Board and allocation of the money out to the department, the funds will be allocated to specific votes within a department, and then to specific programs within those votes.

Again, to be clear, Parliament approves and controls at the level of the vote. The program infrastructure underneath that is a construct, but it's not a control mechanism. Now this is something I'm going to come back to in a couple of weeks, because the president has also talked about purpose-based votes and maybe presenting our information in a different way other than vote 1 operating, vote 5 capital, etc.

Simply allocated out to departments by vote and then within the public accounts, information is presented by vote, and then the underlying program. As we'll see when we get to the InfoBase demo, we're going to be able to paint you a picture, using our budget implementation tracker, of the initiative and where it will be going within the department.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Okay.

In the absence of a change in the way the bill is presented, there won't be a line-by-line list in the public accounts the way that other programs are. Is that correct?

Mr. Brian Pagan: First of all, the president, in his appearance here, has committed to working with the House to introduce some clarifications to the vote wording so that there is specific reference to the annex A1 and the budget initiatives therein.

In terms of the public accounts reporting, we're starting with $7 billion in our vote. If we allocate out $6 billion, that $6 billion will be reported in the public accounts in the departments to which it's been allocated.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Okay, but—

Mr. Brian Pagan: What we're left with is the unallocated money, and that is something that we would bring back to this committee in the winter supps, and we would present that as something that is frozen and is likely to lapse. We've committed that it doesn't get reprofiled, doesn't get rolled over into next year.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Okay, but in a letter to the committee from the parliamentary budget office, they have stated their concern over the difference in the level of detail that will be reported to public accounts. The public accounts will not have the same level of detail. Am I not correct on this, under this—

Mr. Brian Pagan: I'm not responsible for the public accounts. Obviously, I'm somewhat knowledgeable about them, but I'm not familiar with the PBO's letter, and I don't know what concern he has about reporting in the public accounts.

This vote will be reported on in the public accounts in the same way as every other vote that is approved by Parliament. There will be no difference between reporting on this vote or reporting on any other vote, and the monies that are added to existing departmental votes will clearly reflect that allocation.

Mr. Pat Kelly: The PBO said:

> Currently, the Ministry Summaries in Volume 2 of the Public Accounts provide dollar amounts for the total authorities that have been transferred from each TB central vote to the respective department or agency. However, the Public Accounts do not provide the same detail in terms of the actual dollars spent by the department or agency from the TB central votes. This spending data is rolled up and provided for total operating, capital, and grants and contributions.

If I understand that correctly, when this is all complete the concern is that we will not have the same level of accountability through public accounts over the monies that are approved in this vote and then disbursed.

Mr. Brian Pagan: We touched on this, Mr. Kelly, at our last appearance where we suggested that the information available to Parliament for the understanding and control of vote 40 compares very favourably to any other central vote. I used as an example pay list and operating budget carry forward.

We've got $5.2 billion in central votes, and I can't tell you today where that money is going to be allocated. I can't tell you which departments or which amounts. Whereas, vote 40 I can very clearly look you in the eye and tell you that this department is going to get this amount of money for this budget initiative.

That's the plan and those plans will unfold over the year, and there will be a reporting by the department in their departmental results report and in the public accounts.

● (1145)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you very much.

We now go to Mr. Peterson for five minutes.

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Thank you to the witnesses for being with us today. I appreciate your clarification on the vote 40 issue. I'm going to look at the broader picture a bit here.

I picked up on a term that you said, "feeding the beast". I think you indicated the risk big departments run is they're doing reports for the sake of reports. Were you involved in the original drafting of the policy on results?

Mr. Brian Pagan: I was. Derek Armstrong is my executive director of the results division, and I'll have Derek say a word about how we're implementing that policy. This is one of three teams within my sector, and it was one of the president's very first priorities upon taking office in 2015.

I led off quite purposely by talking about the context, the machinery changes, the fact that the Prime Minister created a cabinet committee on results, and they created machinery within the Privy Council Office to support that cabinet committee, so clearly this was very important to the government and was very important to the president. We spent a good deal of time with him in the winter of 2016 looking at the existing policy and some of its limitations.

One of the limitations with the existing approach was its complexity. We had programs and subprograms and sub-subprograms and even levels beneath that in large departments. It was often only at the deepest levels of the department that we were able to get any meaningful results information, and that wasn't always being reflected in the reports presented to Parliament. There was a deliberate effort to simplify and to streamline.

A program is a program in the new policy. We don't discriminate on the type or the size of a program. Each program is important in its own right. It exists for a purpose. It has been approved by government for a purpose, and so we want to be really clear about the results that program is striving to achieve.

Derek, do you want to jump in on that?

Mr. Derek Armstrong (Executive Director, Results Division, Expenditure Management Sector, Treasury Board Secretariat): I think that's just it. The complexity was actually a barrier to being able to understand the business of government. One thing that we did in implementing the new policy was to rationalize a lot of those subprograms and sub-subprograms into programs that made more sense and were more directly linked to departmental results and their core responsibilities.

Just to give you a couple of stats around this, we kept transparency relatively the same, but in terms of the number of higher-level core responsibilities, we moved to about 162 core responsibilities versus 117 strategic outcomes and 262 higher-level programs, writ large, under the old policies. Suddenly we had a much smaller unit of understanding or a set of frameworks that we could wrap our heads around and pose important challenge questions to departments and to facilitate reporting to the public and to Parliament.

We kept the number of programs and departmental indicators relatively the same, though. We went from about 1,100 programs to about 800 programs with 1,200 indicators. This meant that we were clearly able to focus on the important business of departments—and reporting on that—and on important indicators that meaningfully spoke to the results that those departments and their programs were trying to achieve.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: I appreciate that.

Part of it is the concept that the taxpayer, I don't think, is necessarily concerned with process; they want to see the value in the outcome. Does this system get us closer to that? That, I think, is the real crux of it all. If the tax dollars are spent properly, that means the outcome that is aimed for is achieved. The process is the process. Nobody wants to waste money on process.

How does the taxpayer, the Canadian public, know now that the outcomes that they desire are being achieved under this process?

Mr. Derek Armstrong: We're reporting very openly about the indicators, results, and targets that programs are intending to achieve. We're also in the same space—and you'll see this with the GC InfoBase—reporting on the cost of those programs. For the first time, you can see this link between the financial resources and the results that they're achieving. We're reinforcing that link and that discussion with departments by using this new policy on results.

Within Treasury Board we are keenly focused on exactly this question of achieving value for money in the results we look to achieve.

● (1150)

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Mr. McCauley, you have five minutes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Pagan, you talked about the results annex in each submission to Treasury Board. Is that going to be made public or will it show up somewhere?

Mr. Brian Pagan: It's a cabinet document, so therefore it's a cabinet confidence. In many cases the results information that they're committing to for Treasury Board ministers is one and the same as the information in the public-facing document in their departmental plan.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay, so no.

I just want to get to the policy on results. There are a couple of items. In 3.1 it has the expected results.... Actually, I'll read 3.1.2, "Enhance the understanding of the results government seeks to achieve, does achieve, and the resources used to achieve them." Great. This goes back to, again, though, that the $7 billion is not in the departmental plans. When we've asked the departments, they're not even sure what the money's going to be used for. They're very clear they don't know what the intended results are going to be for the hundreds.... We'll use PSPC as an example. For two-thirds of $1 billion, they weren't even sure what the plan was going to be. They hadn't even developed it, but they're asking for money in advance. It says, "enhance the understanding".

Under 3.2.1 it says, "Departments are clear on what they're trying to achieve and how they assess success". Here we have the policy on results that says departments should be clear on what they're trying to achieve and how they assess success. However, when we actually had departments in front of us, including ministers, they were unsure, saying they hadn't formulated the plans, but to give them the money up front.

This goes back to your previous comment about how money not spent will show up in the winter supplementaries. We usually had the opportunity, in the supplementaries, to actually question departments and question ministers on that. The vote 40 issue takes that away entirely.

Again, it seems to be contradictory things. We have vote 40, which is supposed to be better transparency for us, and, yes, I understand what we're trying to do, get the money out the door faster. But you have your own policy on results stating that departments should be clear on what they're trying to achieve and how they assess success. They sat before us in this committee and said, "Well, we don't know what the success is. We don't know what the money's going to be used for." One of the departments said they didn't even know how they came up with the budget; they were just told to put the number in and to ask Treasury Board.

You know, I understand what you're trying to get at, and we appreciate that, but it seems that we have the cart before the horse, or we have the policies before the horse. It's almost as if we have these policies that don't reflect the reality.

Mr. Brian Pagan: Thank you, Mr. McCauley.

I think you and I and most people in this room could talk about the challenges in this space all day and be hard pressed to come up with solutions that everyone will agree upon.

I cited supplementary estimates C from 2015-16 with intent here. The approval by Parliament to spend the money came after the close of business on the last fiscal day of the year. In my mind, there's some tension between Parliament's oversight and departments' ability to actually deliver programs and services.

Unfortunately, we're stuck on this discourse now about program approvals. I would respectfully argue that what we're providing here in the main estimates, after the budget and the budget implementation vote, is better oversight. The business of supply is a continuing order.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm talking about your policy.

Mr. Brian Pagan: Committees can call departments at any time to account for monies that have been entrusted to them, that have been appropriated for those purposes. We are not in any way taking away information or suggesting that committees stop asking questions about the budget implementation vote upon approval of the main estimates. On the contrary—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Let me interrupt, Mr. Pagan. There are a couple of things.

We can request, but that doesn't mean the minister is going to show up. If you remember back about two years, as we were discussing estimates reform, the minister of Treasury Board said here, "I will make sure every minister shows up", etc. You have, however, taken away our ability—it's not you, but rather the minister—to have the various ministers appear to defend their spending: they don't have to anymore, because the money has been pre-approved.

I want to get back to the policy and results. You say the expected result of the policy will be that departments will be clear on what they're trying to achieve and how they assess success, and it goes on and on about being up front.

We actually had PSPC in and we went through the departmental plan. First of all, they didn't know what their money from vote 40 was going to be used for, particularly. We went through the department, and many of their departmental results were not actually set results. One of them was aspirational.

● (1155)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Mr. McCauley, your question will have to wait.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ayoub, you have five minutes.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, thank you for appearing again before this committee to answer our important questions on information sharing.

We are not surprised to find that the Conservatives still have a major conspiracy theory. I would say I feel bad, because when a minister comes before us, that's one thing, but when they are public servants, it's completely different.

The first question I would like to ask is this: Have you ever been asked to withhold information?

Mr. Brian Pagan: No.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: This has never happened?

Mr. Brian Pagan: No, never.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: So that still clarifies something important to me. I was beginning to have doubts, after hearing all the questions that still reflected the famous doubt that the Conservatives have. I still lost a minute clarifying an important point

The Policy on Results has still been an improvement for several years, particularly since its implementation in 2016.

Have you noticed any problems with compliance with the policy? If so, what have you done about it?

Mr. Brian Pagan: Thank you for the question.

In fact, the new approach offered by this policy has created space for ministers to address the Treasury Board. Ministers are therefore each responsible for presenting their own mandate and vision for results. This dynamic allowed for exchanges between ministers on priorities, reduced some of the tensions and smoothed out some of the obstacles to be overcome in order to accomplish the work and review the results.

It also highlighted the fact that each department has a different mandate and different priorities. Under the old policy, which had a very strict hierarchy, departments had to conform to a rigid structure. The new policy makes the exercise much more flexible so that individual ministers can set their own priorities and organize their programs to achieve their objectives.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: You have given us some explanations about the ministers. For the general public, what does the intended transparency change with respect to access to information? There is a dynamic within the Council of Ministers and the Treasury Board.

However, how can the general public be reassured about this transparency? Will the work you have been doing for several months or even years increase transparency and ensure that it is not the other way around?

Mr. Derek Armstrong: The launch of this new policy has given us a good opportunity to simplify the language we use to describe all of the government's responsibilities. If we can use language that is well understood by Canadians and MPs, it's easier to have a substantial conversation about results, indicators and what we're trying to achieve as public servants.

● (1200)

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: I appreciate that. I have a background in economics, but I don't have a background in finance or accounting. I imagine that all Canadians are happy to have a simpler language that they can understand, a more direct language that is based on results, which allow other questions to be asked. When we understand, we are able to ask questions.

Mr. Derek Armstrong: That's exactly it.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Thank you for the clarification.

This marks the end of my five minutes.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Mr. Blaikie, you have three minutes.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I'd like to start by serving notice of motion for the following motion:

> That the Committee invite each Minister responsible for the departments and agencies listed in the table on pages A1–2 through A1–8 of the Main Estimates 2018-19 titled "Budget 2018: Details of Spending Measures and Proposed Departmental Allocations" to provide a briefing as well as answer questions regarding the associated initiatives, and that the meetings be held no later than Wednesday, June 6, 2018.

I have a second motion:

> That, notwithstanding motions adopted by the Committee regarding the subject matter of meetings to be held before a stated date, the Committee use the remaining meetings before Tuesday, June 5, 2018, for the study of the estimates process and reserve its meetings on Tuesday, June 5, 2018, and Thursday, June 7, 2018, for consideration of votes referred to Committee upon the tabling of the Main Estimates 2018-19.

I have those in writing for the chair, should she wish.

I want to ask Mr. Pagan a question. You and your minister also have talked about vote 40 being not quite clear. I think sometimes the impression given is that it's necessary to align the information in the budget and the main estimates.

Is it not possible that a table could have been produced without seeking authority for the funding that would show the plan to spend that money and follow that money through the course of supplementary estimates and that we give authority as the grants or programs are actually ready to go? What I'm trying to do is dispute the premise here that you need to ask for all the authority up front in order to reconcile the information in the budget and the main estimates.

Would it not have been possible to devise a mechanism by which you could indicate what government is planning to spend? When we're good and ready, and these programs or proposals have been put through Treasury Board, we'll come through the supplementary estimates to reconcile that information. What continues to mystify me is the contention that it's necessary to ask for the authority in order to provide the information.

Mr. Brian Pagan: I'm not sure where to go on this. If I use, again, the winter supplementaries as an example, Parliament is providing its approval after the close of business on the last fiscal day. Sorry, it wasn't Parliament, it was royal assent. In that particular year, it passed the House on March 26.

What I'm trying to point out is this tension between oversight, having information and being able to ask questions, and control and approval of programs. Respectfully, we're suggesting to you that it's the executive that approves the programs, and Parliament has to have a very clear view of where that money is going. We have done that in the construct of the budget implementation vote where we have listed by department—

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Wouldn't it be possible to provide that same —

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Time is up, but I gave you the leeway.

Thank you very much.

We will suspend for a minute, and then we'll get the next group of witnesses to do a demo on the InfoBase.

Thank you.

● _____ (Pause) _____

●

● (1205)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Committee members, please take your seats.

Mr. Pagan.

Mr. Brian Pagan: This is a demo.

Just as a word of introduction, Andrew is going to walk the committee through a real-time demonstration of InfoBase. You can be the driver. He will direct this wherever you steer. We've done a similar session with the Senate finance committee, as well.

GC InfoBase was created by TBS in 2013. It stems from a report by this committee in 2012, which included the recommendation that TBS create a searchable online database. This is the result.

It is very much an iterative process. We conceived InfoBase in 2013. Every year we have successfully added to the information holdings of the tool.

Andrew will walk you through this now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Andrew Gibson (Director, Expenditure Analysis, Expenditure Management Sector, Treasury Board Secretariat): Good afternoon, everyone.

I'm here to introduce GC InfoBase. It is an online tool that presents data on finances, people management and now government performance.

I will begin by presenting the tool, the principles it is based on, and recent changes relating to performance.

Four principles guide the evolution of the InfoBase.

First, we want it to be a reliable source. All figures presented can be found in a published source, such as the Public Accounts of Canada or the estimates.

Second, we present the information in a nuanced and comprehensive manner. There are several general presentations on the data so that the user can understand them as a whole. There are also detailed presentations for people who want more details.

Third, it is critical that GC InfoBase does not interpret or give an opinion; the data speaks for itself. Government organizations may submit background information through footnotes, but the data are presented in the same manner.

Finally, it is a tool that continuously adapts to users' needs. We are always looking for new techniques to communicate and visualize data.

[*English*]

Those are the four guiding principles.

What you have up on the screen in front of you is the main page. I'm going to walk through the different sections of the tool.

The main principle behind the InfoBase is that we seek to "represent" information over and over again, in different ways. When someone cracks open the public accounts, it might be something really relevant to them, or their eyes might glaze over because there are a ton of tables and a ton of numbers and it doesn't tell them a story.

What we're seeking to do is to say that some people like tables and numbers—that's great—some people like to have the information described to them with words—you'll see that—and some people like to have pictures drawn for them—we're also doing that in the tool.

● (1210)

[*Translation*]

The finance section begins with a government-wide overview. Then there is a department and even a program, just to see how much data is available. Then there is the data on people, and again it goes back to the government level. Then we pick a department. Then there is the government's performance data. Once again, we will choose a department just to see the data entered at this level.

[*English*]

After that, we're going to look at some featured content.

I noticed a moderate amount of interest at the table around vote 40 and where that information is going. We're going to show you what we've done to drive more transparency around that, and I'm going to be talking about what more we're going to be doing. I'll talk about my favourite giant picture, which kind of lays out the government so that people can understand what information is available.

We're going to start with finances.

I should also say, there's a section here where, if someone just wants to search for a word, a department, or program name, they can jump straight to it. We are really trying to be inspired by all of the work that's done out there in terms of the Google app and all that stuff. They want to make their product as easy as possible for people to use.

There's always this weird tension. A while ago it used to be that you would come to work to use the Internet, and now, you go home to use the Internet. We're trying to make sure that the kinds of tools you get to use in your personal life are also available to you at work.

Going to the finance section, this is at the level of the Government of Canada. I'm not going to go over everything because I will bore you all to tears with that level of detail. If anyone wants me to stop, I will, and we can focus on a particular thing.

I'm sure some of you have noticed that the government likes to use a lot of complicated, technical terms when it talks about how it spends money. For those who aren't familiar with all the definitions, we have this hidden section here, where we lay out all of the definitions. We don't want to stop people from actually learning something, so we don't slap people in the face by making them read that right away, but it's there if they need it.

What you have here with these blue squares is what we call our welcome mat. It doesn't look like much, but it actually combines hundreds of reports into one kind of Government of Canada view. What you can easily see without having to open any books or do any homework or anything like that is how much spending was five years ago. This is a number you'll see in public accounts. You'll also see how many FTEs were employed in the Government of Canada last year, and what are we planning to spend in fiscal year 2019-20.

Going down, what you see here is a split of spending and FTEs by Government of Canada spending areas. You have economic affairs, social affairs, government affairs, crown corporations, international affairs, and internal services. Right away you can learn some interesting stuff. You see, for example, that while economic affairs is the highest spender, social affairs has a large number of FTEs. If you're particularly interested, you can just click on one of these bars —I clicked on social affairs—and you see a split by the particular Government of Canada outcome area, so you can see that breakdown.

Also, I should have said that, at the bottom of every page, or the bottom of every one of these little panels, you see a link where you can actually go and see the raw data behind all these graphs.

Moving down, you see authorities and expenditures. This is basically what was approved by Parliament and what was actually spent. This is as per public accounts for the past five years. You will see the current voted and statutory split as of the main estimates that have been tabled for 2018-19. It just tries to lay out graphically the largest areas of statutory spending for the Government of Canada, so someone can see that old age security and the Canada health transfers are by far the two largest bubbles in statutory spending.

Moving down, you see the details on voted estimates. You see—no surprise—that national defence is the largest recipient of voted authorities, followed by Indigenous Services Canada and Treasury Board with all of our fancy central votes.

Moving along, you have a five-year history of transfer payments. That is the largest particular area of government spending. I'll go over that again when we get to one of the other visualizations. You can see a breakdown between grants, contributions, and other transfer payments. Then you can see a five-year history of personnel expenditures for the Government of Canada.

That was one view, and what I said in the intro was that we were going to then dive down and pick a particular department. We're going to do Parks Canada.

You scroll up to the top. You start typing in "Parks Canada". It auto-suggests it for you. I'm not going to go over it in the same level of detail. I'll just touch on where things are a bit different.

You have the same welcome mat, but now it's focused just on that particular department. You get to see the relative size of Parks Canada compared to the rest of government. You can see that same five-year history of authorities and expenditures. Here is something where you can look at a history of the standard objects of expenditure—for example, if you want to see what's been going on with personnel spending. You might also want to turn on transfer payments. I can turn on other parts of this so you can get a dynamic way of looking at where Parks Canada's level of the department spending money is. Going down, you can see where Parks Canada is in terms of transfer payments. I'm just going to skip a little bit, though, to the more interesting thing.

This is a transparency initiative that we started last year, and it's information that is actually not in any published document, and it provides a whole new level of transparency at the program level. What you see here with that horizontal bar chart is that each bar represents a program and it's split into the types of spending for that particular program. If we want, for example, to just focus in and see what the personnel spending is for all programs, there it is.

If you want to drill in and see professional and special services spending, you can get that. This is not information that is published anywhere else, but it does provide a lot more insight and it lets you understand at a much greater level of depth what a particular program is doing.

What you can do from here is you can say visitor experience is interesting; it's a program you might want to know more about it, so you can click on that and you have yet again another infographic at the—

● (1215)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Mr. Gibson, can I just interrupt you for a minute?

Committee, I need your approval. Do you wish Mr. Gibson to continue, or do you wish to ask questions? If you wish him to continue on for another 10 minutes....

Mr. Andrew Gibson: I can do 10 minutes; I can condense it down. I can go over....

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Then we can do one round of seven minutes. Okay?

Go ahead.

Mr. Andrew Gibson: There's a lot of content in here, so it's not easy to go through and do a—

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): No, we don't want you to hurry through.

Mr. Andrew Gibson: Okay.

At the level of a program, you have the same welcome mat; you can see what's going on with this particular program. Going on, you have authorities and expenditures and you have a nice pie chart that says, this is the kind of program this is: it is a program that spends most of its money on personnel; on acquisition of land, buildings, and works, which makes sense for Canada; on professional and special services; and then on all the other spending objects. It's just an extra level of detail so that someone can understand what exactly is going on in this program.

Jumping up to the top, we're going to jump back to the level of the Government of Canada and are going to look at people management data.

This is something nice, because we added a bunch of employment equity data recently so that someone can get an even more detailed sense of what's going on with a particular department.

At the level of the Government of Canada, you can see a five-year history of the head count for the federal public service; you can see a nice dynamic map that shows all federal employees; if you mouse over a particular province, such as British Columbia, you can get a five-year history of the head count within that province.

I'm going to jump back up. Let's pick Canadian Heritage. Here you can start seeing some interesting stuff. Again, you can see Heritage in terms of head count compared with the rest of the government—a five-year-history head count for Heritage. You can see where Heritage employees are distributed across the country: the majority are in the NCR; there are 39 in British Columbia. That head count hasn't changed too much over the past five years.

What's interesting here is that now you can look at demographic trends for Heritage Canada. If you want to see what has been going on with the age composition of this department, you can see that there has been a slight increase in the number of employees aged 29 or less. You can also then go over to average age and see how Heritage Canada compares with the rest of government in terms of average age. Some departments skew older, some skew younger. It's interesting contextual data to understand the department.

You can also see the composition of the EX cadres. You can see what the different levels are for EXs who are managing this department. If you want, you can click on the non-EX box and see what the ratio is between employees and management for that particular department.

We have first official languages. You can see that for 60% of employees in Heritage Canada, French is their official language, and English is the inverse, at 40%.

You can also see the gender distribution: 66% of employees are women, and 33% are men.

Moving over to results—and we'll go back to the level of the whole government again—you see our terms and definitions and stuff like that. We have our promise that departmental plans from 2018-19 are going to be updated here as soon as we can finish processing all of the data. This is a transition year between the old policy and the new policy, so things are moving a little more slowly than normal.

The first thing we show you is a handy-dandy summary in which we break out results in two categories. This is data as of the departmental reports that were tabled in the fall. You see that as of the fall, the larger chunk of indicators tells you whether results were achieved that were due at the end of that fiscal year; the smaller one, underneath, is for results that have a longer target. You can see where attention is required. In some cases, they've decided the indicator is no longer necessary, or their information isn't there.

Below that, you have the largest departments, in terms of indicators. If you look at Canada Revenue Agency, you can get a mini-report card just for Canada Revenue Agency. Underneath, we have an interactive way of exploring data within the results data. This tool is in an awkward, adolescent phase right now, because we still have data as of the old policy—those are part of the departmental reports that were tabled in the fall—and we have planning information under the new policy. We're having to bridge the two policies.

You'll see here reference still to the idea of "sub" and "sub-subs", because that was under the old policy. What this allows you to do is explore and look at all the programs, the subprograms, and the results. If you're someone who is very positive in nature, you can actually click on a filter to indicate that you only want to look at programs in which the result is being achieved. If you don't share that other person's rosy view of the world, you can change and just look at areas in which attention is required.

● (1220)

I'll pick, for example, the subprogram "Service Complaints" to show you what you can do.

If we open that up, you can see the result they're trying to achieve is that taxpayers receive a timely resolution to their service complaints. You can see that they were targeting 80% and that they met it. They actually achieved 83% in terms of percentage of taxpayer service complaints resolved within 30 business days.

Just to show you the through line, if we move over to "Planned Data", so if we change the tab, this is "Planning". There's no actual results information in here. You can see that under "Tax", you still have "Service Complaints" as a program, and you can see they're still seeking to receive the same result, and they continue to target 80%.

That will be reported in the fall, when those reports are tabled.

So this gives you a flavour of not only the financial people management but the results data. I'm going to go back out to the main section. How am I doing on time?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): You've got five minutes.

Mr. Andrew Gibson: Perfect.

So going down to the featured content—I'll keep the budget funding for the very end— this one here is near and dear to my heart. I very much like how this lays out the government. This was inspired by the tool that Steve Ballmer does for the U.S. government. We took a look at that and thought we could build something a little cooler. So this is dynamic, and you can kind of open up different areas. What this particular slice of data shows you is broken out by ministry, what are the largest spenders for the Government of Canada. You can see it's Finance, ESDC, National Defence. No surprise. I should say also that you have "Ministerial Portfolio" in the first column. Then you have organizations and then the actual programs. If you want, you can click on a program, and you can get a description of it. You can see what the spending was, the number of FTEs, or you can go straight to the infographic. It really lets someone see the global view, find something interesting, and then dive in.

There are a lot of different data slices you can do here. My favourite one is in terms of types of spending. This can tell someone right away what the Government of Canada spends money on. What you see here is that by far the largest block is transfer payments. Below that is personnel. If you flow along for personnel, you can see the top four spenders of personnel are defence or security and justice-related, and underneath that, are professional and special services. So if someone asks what the Government of Canada spends money on, it's transfer payments, it's salaries—a good chunk of those salaries goes to defence and security and justice—and after professional special services. It really helps someone come to grips with the huge amount of activities that we undertake.

I won't belabour this too much, even though it's 100% my favourite part of this tool. I could go on. We've kept that same design aesthetic for tracking budget funding. So what we have here is—this is as of the budget—something we're going to be adding to substantively over the course of the year. In its current state, what you have in this first kind of candy-stripe column is the actual vote 40. This represents the $7 billion that lines up with what was in budget 2018.

The next column contains the budget measures. You can see, based on size, what are the larger budget measures, and then you can see the organizations that are receiving funding. Where there is more than one organization, you can just click on the little plus sign, and a diagram will open up and you can see. If you want, you can click on the particular budget measure, and what we did is we went in and tore apart the budget for the users, and where there was relevant text that lined up with tables 8 to 11, we got that text for the users and it's available in the diagram.

If you want to reorganize this, you can instead say "I want to see all of the budget funding that a particular organization is getting." So here you can see that indigenous services is getting the largest amount of budget spending. You can open it up. You can see all the different initiatives. If you want, you can filter on a particular chapter within the budget, if you just want to see the initiatives that were in the growth chapter.

This diagram is as of the budget. Over the course of the year, we're planning to add an extra column and we're going to say that, as initiatives are improved by TB, we're going to capture data from TB supplementaries that are provided by departments, that says, "Of the money that's being approved for this particular budget item, these are the programs that are getting it, and this is how much each program is getting."

It should be very useful for Canadians and parliamentarians to see exactly where budget money is being allocated.

There is a bunch more content, but I think I'm at the end of my five minutes.

● (1225)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): You are. I'm just going to do one round of seven minutes, and that will bring us to five minutes to 1:00 p.m. I'm an hour behind schedule.

Mr. Jowhari, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Actually, could you put that slide back up, the last slide that you had on the budget? I'm going to go to Mr. Pagan. I'm going to try to explain what I understand is happening with this $7 billion and how transparent you are, because there's been a lot of discussion, and I think this tries to explain it, at least in my mind.

I looked at the $7 billion as an approved line of credit for a project that I have for my home. I know what items I'm going to use that money for. Then, at the end, at some point, I come back and say, "I used this line of credit for this type of activity," and I'm able to explain for whom, when, and how much I spent. I'm trying to bring that down for when I go and talk to my constituents and this question is raised. I'm trying to simplify it in such a way that I can talk to my constituents.

First of all, $7 billion is a big number. Second of all, everybody is concerned that this is going to disappear. Most of my colleagues have talked about that. There is no transparency.

Can you help put it into a language that I can use to go and talk with my constituents, to be able to explain it and then translate it into...? Now that I have a tool, I can go and tell them, "Look, this is what it is, and this is what's going to happen."

● (1230)

Mr. Brian Pagan: Thank you, Mr. Jowhari. I'll try to put this in terms that you can use to explain this to constituents.

First, as I think has been made manifest here, this is an online tool that anybody in the country can access today. The information is out there, and it is very clearly aligned with the annex in the estimates and the annex in the budget.

You used the words "line of credit". In fact, I would present it for what it is. If we want to use analogies of home repairs, it's an estimate of what it is going to cost to refurbish your home. In the budget the government has clearly said that it wants to spend money by department, by measure, and by amount, so we are taking these estimates of the program expenditures, because the estimates are "up to" amounts, and we're presenting for Parliament a very clear picture of where the government intends on spending money by department, by initiative, and by amount.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: So you're almost like a contractor coming to my house and saying, "You want to do this? Here is an estimate."

Mr. Brian Pagan: We're saying, "Here is what it's going to take to deliver on budget 2018."

Of course, the business of supply presents an ongoing opportunity to engage Treasury Board officials and departmental officials to understand how that work is progressing. The president has been very clear that these are "up to" amounts, and there will be instances where we don't spend the full estimate because there can be economies in departmental overhead or synergies with other programs. Any funds that are not spent stay in the vote, and they lapse in the vote. They are not repurposed or reused on any other part of—

Mr. Majid Jowhari: I saw categories of spending. If I want to draw a parallel, it would be like a contractor giving me an estimate and then saying, "This is how much we're going to spend on the roofing. This is how much we're going to spend on redesigning the kitchen." Are there categories in here so that I can draw the same parallel?

Mr. Brian Pagan: Andrew, help me here in terms of tagging.

What we've done here is we have presented the budget table by.... We can break it out by department, by chapter. There is a growth chapter.

In this example here, where we have a very specific example of what CMHC is going to do with rental housing. That fits in with the —

Mr. Majid Jowhari: What triggered that question in my mind was that at some point you're adding another column, where the actual spend comes.

There is an estimate. There is an allocation of where the money is going to go, and later on, when you have completed the job, then you're going to come back and say, "This amount is actually how much has gone to the roof." That is the way I was trying to relate to it.

Mr. Brian Pagan: Right.

Andrew, before you introduce more detail here, what colour is that?

Mr. Andrew Gibson: It's randomly selected.

Mr. Brian Pagan: That pale Mediterranean sunset colour corresponds to—is that a budget theme, or is that a department?

Mr. Andrew Gibson: It just helps visually to differentiate one from another, so no, the colour doesn't mean anything.

Mr. Brian Pagan: Upon approval of $447.2 million for social housing, the intention here is that we would allocate that out to the department or departments involved in the delivery of that program. As Andrew was saying, we're going to add a column that will specify precisely which program within the department or departments it has been added to.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: It looks like the $7 billion is already broken into different allocations, as the allocation is made and the money is spent, then the detail is going to be added in here. I fail to understand where we're not being transparent because we can be as transparent at the moment, but the money hasn't been spent. Therefore, there's really blank to report on. The allocation is there, though. Is that the tool we could use to be able to demystify this $7 billion?

Mr. Andrew Gibson: We won't be reporting on the actual spending. Once money is transferred to departments, we lose a line of sight on it. What we will be showing, however, is exactly which program or programs are receiving that funding.

You mentioned the idea of categories. We're moving to add more and more detail at the program level and we're adding what are called tags. For example, one of the things that we'll be adding soon is client groups. We could say, "Show me all of the programs that support indigenous youth that receive budget money", and we'll be able to show those particular budget initiatives and the programs. At the end of the year, the total spending for all those programs will be shown in public accounts and you'll be able to see that total spending.

● (1235)

Mr. Majid Jowhari: How well do you think—?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): You have 15 seconds.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: How well do you think the public knows about this tool? You can answer this as part of other questions.

Mr. Andrew Gibson: We're looking to do better on that.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you.

Mr. McCauley, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: This is fascinating stuff.

You commented that once the spending is done, you lose the line of sight on it. Could you expand on that a bit, in answer to Mr. Jowhari's question, about what Mr. Gibson—because I'm going to ask him about—

Mr. Brian Pagan: It speaks to the supply bill. When we allocate money out to a department, it fits within the structures approved by Parliament, which is votes and not programs. Within a vote, there are a number of programs. We're coming back to you later in June. I think it's June 12.

The president is very keen to advance some alternate models of parliamentary control, like purpose-based votes. Right now, within —pick a department—the Canada Revenue Agency, they have a budget of some $4 billion. All of their programs slosh around in either their operating vote or their capital budget.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I want to get to a specific example of Mr. Gibson's addressing the opioid crisis—$134 million in vote 40. The only real line is that the government is committed to taking action. Could you bring that up? It's under Health Canada.

Again, we hear that there's all the information you need, but there's $134 million and that the government's committed to taking action. Now, once that $134 million is spent, how will it show that detail in the public accounts or how will we be able to track, item by item, how that money is being spent here? It's like the argument that, if the government buys 20,000 iPhones every year, it shows up in the public accounts—as long as it's not through vote 40—as 20,000 iPhones. How will that detail show up in this new program? It's pretty amazing if you can figure out a way through the rabbit warren to find out stuff. How will it show?

Mr. Brian Pagan: What we see here is the money for the opioid crisis of $154 million. This is—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: It's $134 million.

Mr. Brian Pagan: Once allocated, we will be adding another level of detail here to specify which departmental votes that money is going into.

Then, in the public accounts, that will be part of the reporting back. Therefore, if in vote 1, operating, Health Canada is starting with, say, $800 million and we're advancing $150 million for operating and $54 million for grants and contributions, then they'll take their $800 million operating plus $100 million—so that they'll have $900 million, their grants and contributions—whatever that is, plus the $54 million that's allocated by Treasury Board to report on. In that way, there will a be a full accounting for—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: How will the $134 million that's in the vote 40 be detailed in the InfoBase? Mr. Gibson commented to Mr. Jowhari that once the money is spent, it leaves the line of sight. To what level of detail will the items in the vote 40 be shown in this? The Parliamentary Budget Officer stated that it would just show as a lump sum and that it won't show as detailed in the public accounts. However, you're indicating that it will show up here, as you mentioned earlier. To what level of detail will something like $134 million, for a commitment to taking action, provide detail...?

Mr. Brian Pagan: It goes to the level of vote and program. Of this money in the budget, we will be able to specify which votes it is going into at Health Canada and for which programs.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: We won't see detail for what that $134 million is spent on. Whether it's hiring people to provide services to get people off opioids or adding a building, we won't show a level of detail that actually breaks it out.

Mr. Brian Pagan: The information you're looking for is almost by definition always after the fact. That's information that's provided in the departmental results report tabled at the end of the fiscal year.

● (1240)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: It's not in the departmental plan now, but you're saying it will show up in the DPRs?

Mr. Brian Pagan: Most of the budget 2018 funding is for programs that will endure more than a single year. Ultimately, as these items are approved, they will all be reflected in departmental plans, and they will be part of—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: But it's not in the departmental plans.

Mr. Brian Pagan: I'm saying, Mr. McCauley, that they will be. Once it's approved by Treasury Board—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: But what's the point of its being in next year's plan, when you're using the money this year?

Mr. Brian Pagan: It's that there will be ongoing expenditures once the project has been approved.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Right, and next year's money should go on next year's departmental plan.

The point of the departmental plan is to show results taxpayers are going to receive for this money spent; but it won't actually show....

Mr. Brian Pagan: Again, supplementary estimates (A), (B), and (C) also are monies provided by Parliament to deliver programs and services, and in many cases—in fact, in most cases—those initiatives are not in the departmental plans either. I take—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: But we'll get ministers before us to defend those, whereas right now we had a minister before us, Minister Qualtrough, who, when we asked her about her $650 million, didn't have an answer. She said, I don't know; ask my staff.

You understand our quandary. We have ministers appearing before us who have no idea what's in their vote 40, and yet we're supposed to just vote on it and sign off on it, saying go ahead, and maybe we'll see it in the departmental plan.

When we asked about the departmental plan, PSPC said their plan results were aspirational, for some of their items. Some of them were set targets, but some were just aspirational targets. What's the point of a departmental plan, if it's not setting actual targets? Now we have items that are in the departmental plan not as firm targets but more as aspirational targets, and we're saying, maybe the money this year will show up in next year's plan.

Do you understand our concern?

Mr. Brian Pagan: I do, Mr. McCauley, and I am hearing you, but —

Mr. Kelly McCauley: It's constant that every person we ask has a different answer.

Mr. Brian Pagan: Somebody made the point earlier that the $7 billion in the budget implementation vote is not in the departmental plans. That's a truism, and it represents less than 10% of the voted spending this year.

So there is a detailed—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: But $7 billion? You can't just say it's less—

Mr. Brian Pagan: May I?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: —than 10%: $7 billion is a lot of money.

Mr. Brian Pagan: There is detailed and specific program and results information for more than 90% of government spending. The $7 billion in the budget implementation vote in most cases has not yet been approved by Treasury Board, and therefore departments can't articulate with the precision that would be required in—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: But Parliament is supposed to approve it in advance, you're saying.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you.

Mr. Blaikie, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I have a technical question about InfoBase, particularly about the screen you're showing.

We're looking at the approximately $7 billion that appears in vote 40, and then you say that you supplement some of the information here with information from the budget, including proposed expenditures. There is a lot of information in the budget that doesn't appear in table A2.11, including information in the back tables for various chapters.

For instance, in the back table of chapter 4 there's apparently a suggested amount for "Establishing Better Rules to Protect the Environment and Grow the Economy", and it's anticipated that the government will spend $125 million in this fiscal year on that initiative. This doesn't appear anywhere in table A2.11, so authority is not being sought for that spending under vote 40.

Is this information about budget 2018, or is this information about vote 40? What I'm trying to suggest is that these are actually two different things. It's a little bit misleading to say that it's information on budget 2018, because there are many things in the budget, including in the budget tables in the back chapters, that one would think were part of the budget but that aren't part of table A2.11.

That's fair enough—table A2.11 has to do with what we're seeking authority for—but I think this helps emphasize some of the differences between the estimates process and the budget document, a distinction that is being muddied, I would say, with this new vote 40 mechanism.

Mr. Brian Pagan: You raise a very important point here, which is that the budget is more than just the initiatives that government has articulated for 2018-19. It also includes adjustments to statutory legislation, to tax expenditures, etc. The estimates, by definition, are limited to voted appropriation, so when we say "the budget", we're speaking specifically to the amounts to be spent on a cash basis for this fiscal year. We are not reflecting the government's intentions with respect to any tax measures or changes in tax expenditures, and that sort of thing. That's a separate—

● (1245)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: This particular item talks about spending that money in support of developing better rules to protect the environment. It is characterized in the budget both in this table and also in the antecedent chapter as money that government intends to spend. Maybe that's money it intends to somehow get through an alteration in statutory authority. That's not clear. It's just not clear.

In any event, that was a technical question because I'm trying to understand, when I go to that, if that is information about vote 40; and therefore, I guess only information in the budget that pertains, strictly speaking, to the vote 40 items would appear there, not other information as appears in other tables of the budget. Fair enough.

Mr. Andrew Gibson: In order to avoid that confusion, we say "Presented below are the new spending measures listed in Table A2.11 of the 2018 Budget Plan". Before you do anything—

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: So it's just A2.11.

Mr. Andrew Gibson: Yes. Then if you click on the link, it will take you to table A2.11—

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: —which mostly corresponds to the annex in the main estimates, but actually not perfectly. There are a couple of discrepancies.

I'm just saying that this is supposed to benefit me as a parliamentarian and provide some clarity. I think overall there probably is more information, but it's not exactly self-evident. You have been using the term "truism". Truisms are things that are so obviously true that they are hardly worth mentioning. I wouldn't quite say these are truisms. They may be true, but they are not truisms because it actually takes a bit of work to figure out what's going on, what's represented, and what's not.

I might spend a little bit of my extra time, for the benefit of the committee, running with the analogy of the house renovations and the contractor. Analogies are always prickly things, but I do think the proper characterization of that analogy is not that you're going for a quote, and you're getting it back, and the contractors says he or she expects to spend this and then later reports what the actual expenditure was on the product you wanted. The analogy is a contractor who says he or she would expect to spend this on the roof, and this on the walls, and this on the flooring, but it depends what flooring you pick.

The contractor is asking for approval for a certain amount for the flooring, and a certain amount for the windows, and a certain amount for the roof. Then they're going to go away and make decisions. They're going to make decisions about what shingles you're going to have, and what windows you're going to have, and what flooring you're going to have. When the contractor is done, they will come back and let you know what they did, and they will table the receipts.

As somebody who's living in the home, I would expect you would want that contractor to come back to you and say they've done research on the flooring and here are the different kinds of flooring you could have, and here are the price points. Here's what's in your budget, and here's what's not. Now the contractor would like you to approve the particular things they're going to do with this money.

I would expect that, if a contractor came to me and said here's the budget for the flooring, they're going to go away and pick the floor. They can't spend more than you authorized; they can spend less; but when you come home, you will have new flooring. The contractor will have decided what it is. At that point it's too late to do anything about it other than approving more money for the contractor to rip out the floor and put in the floor you want.

The point about parliamentary oversight is that parliamentarians are supposed to have a pretty good idea of what the money is going to be spent on before they approve the money. If they just say there's a program and they like the idea of that program and that seems like a reasonable number even though you can't fill in all the details, go ahead and spend the money and just report on how you spent it, that wouldn't be good enough for homeowners. They would expect far more hands-on decision-making power in terms of the details of what's being done under that budget item.

I do think it's an apt analogy, but I think it has to be rounded out. I won't speak for my colleagues here, but what I'm asking for—what the NDP is asking for, and I suspect maybe others as well—is it's well enough to say here are our projected expenditures for the year and here's more or less what we want to spend it on. However, in the old process—that is to say, all the approvals that have happened heretofore—parliamentarians, before they approved the money, have been able to put the question to the minister who has already gone through Treasury Board, already figured out how many EFTs are going to be there, and ask those questions before approving.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you, Mr. Blaikie.

Mr. Peterson, you have the last seven minutes.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

That analogy was riveting. We've learned that one person's truth is another person's truism.

I have some questions on the product itself.

What's the cost of this, generally speaking? Do we know that information?

● (1250)

Mr. Andrew Gibson: Yes, it started out being built by just one person. Now, it has a team of three people devoted to it, with a salary cost of about $400,000 a year. The lifetime cost over the last five years is well under $2 million.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Are there any issues with getting timely information from the departments? Obviously, that's the source of the information here. If there are any, is there any way to help them speed up that process?

Mr. Brian Pagan: That's very interesting. As Andrew says, it's been an iterative process.

When we started out in 2013 we simply took estimates documents and we digitized them, and anything that was in the estimates was in InfoBase. Then over time we have added to this personnel information, the results information from this past year, and in the very near future, the planning information that exists in tabled departmental plans.

Notwithstanding how well the demo went, and how effortlessly Andrew was able to transition from one box to another bubble, underneath all of that are some incredibly manual processes. We don't have sophisticated data systems that allow all of this to be dumped in a database. We work from Excel spreadsheets, and we have to transpose information from one process to another. We have been rectifying that over time with departments. There's still some way to go in terms of being able to push a button and get all of this information.

It's working through some of those processes and automating them, capturing the information once, and then being able to repurpose it.

Do you want to say anything else on that?

Mr. Andrew Gibson: No, that was a perfect answer.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: In regard to storage and security, I suppose most of the information is all public anyway, so security isn't so much an issue as accessing the information, but it could be manipulated in a way that would be potentially inaccurate, or changed. Are there any issues about that?

Mr. Andrew Gibson: No, it's currently protected the same way everything on the Treasury Board website is protected. Any attempts at defacement would be caught by Shared Services Canada and the internal IT security team at Treasury Board.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: In terms of storage, how is it stored right now, in-house somewhere?

Mr. Andrew Gibson: It's all in-house right now, but we are following the lead of the Government of Canada's CIO, and we're definitely looking at cloud.

The way it's currently built limits our ability to present more detailed information, and we want to change that, so we're looking at cloud to make this even better and provide even more information.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Okay, I appreciate that.

I think I only have about three minutes left. Mr. Gibson, if you want to show us three more minutes of a thing, please do.

Mr. Andrew Gibson: That's delightful.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: I know your passion for the project comes through, so we'd like to hear another tidbit or two, in the couple of minutes we have left.

Mr. Andrew Gibson: One of the things that we have here.... I mentioned the idea that you have program tagging. This is something that we made a big hoopla about last year when we presented to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance. We showed this new tool. What you have is this whole mix of programs. This speaks to one of the nice changes that was brought about by the policy on results.

Previously, you had a lot of detailed information that was siloed in all the individual departmental reports. If someone came in, for example, and said, "I want to create the virtual department of clean drinking water so that I can understand what the government is doing to ensure that all Canadians have access to clean drinking water", that person would have had the joyous task of opening 80 or 90 reports and one for each year. That person would have had to go through and ask, "Is this a program related to this? Is this a program...?" It's very manual and very error prone.

What we're doing to change that under the new policy is we're bringing all this low-level information to one place. We let someone come in and say, "I want to just kind of subdivide the world this way. I want to use this tagging scheme to pull together programs."

What we currently have here are four ways of reassembling the government into different collections of programs. The first two are the classic ones. We have appropriated federal organizations by ministerial portfolio and by just an A to Z listing, so that's not particularly interesting. Then we have two of these new tagging things. We have what we do. We kind of reassemble the government based on....

Here, I'll turn this on instead of talking about it. I showed this before in terms of that bar graph. We have economic affairs and social affairs. What you can do, though, is drill in and see under economic affairs the following activities: employment and income security.

If you open that up, you get a description of what that is, and you see all of the programs that contribute to that particular area. If you want, you can click and see an infographic. You can see that this is the historical and planned spending for this particular sub-area. We've taken all the programs under that tag, and we've reassembled them into a pretend department of employment and income security.

We'll be adding to this over the course of the year. We're going to be adding another tagging scheme: client groups. I mentioned this before. If you want to see all the programs that support seniors, if you want to see all the programs that support youth, that's going to be there.

One of the challenges with some of these tagging schemes is what's called double counting. If we go back out—and that sounds ominous, but it's not—we have this thing called "How we help". This is a tagging scheme where we show the different ways in which a program delivers its service. Is it a program with service for Canadians? Is it a transfer payment?

Some programs deliver their services through multiple channels. Some programs support more than one client group. You might have a program that supports both aboriginal and employers or something. If you were to add up all the programs under there, it might look like we're saying that the government is actually spending three times the amount. This is why we have these warnings that say that this is a tagging scheme where programs have been tagged with more than one particular tag. We're showing the up-to amount. This is the largest amount of money that's being spent for youth, for example. These are all the programs that have been tagged as supporting youth, but they do other things as well. They might also be supporting seniors. You would see some other spending there.

● (1255)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you very much.

With that, I'd like to thank the witnesses for being here. Thank you for your presentation.

The meeting is adjourned.

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